

#249 JOE FRANK KARB
USS *ARIZONA*, SURVIVOR

INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 5, 1996

TRANSCRIBED BY:
CARA KIMURA
JULY 27, 1997

Joe Karb (JK): . . . down the drain.

Michael Stucky (MS): I guess so. Where did you end up? On tin cans or . . .

JK: No, I wound up -- after this, I wound up -- I was supposed to go to new construction. The Chief Yeoman . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes)

MS: The following oral history interview was conducted by Michael Stucky for the National Park Service, USS *ARIZONA* Memorial at the Sheraton Waikiki, December 5, 1996 at 10:30 a.m. The person being interviewed is Joe Karb, who was on the USS *ARIZONA* on December 7, 1941.

For the record, sir, would you please state your full name?

JK: Joe Frank Karb.

MS: And where were you born?

JK: Port Washington, Wisconsin.

MS: And when was that?

JK: In 1907, October 4.

MS: Very good, sir. Thank you. And what was your hometown in '41? Did you have a hometown?

JK: Yes. Rockford, Illinois, I guess.

MS: Rockford, Illinois.

JK: I left Port Washington when I was in the second grade after I fell in love with my second grade teacher.

MS: Oh. (Laughs) That could be a little problem.

(Laughter)

JK: And I still remember her name even.

MS: Wow.

JK: Miss Beebe. (Laughs)

MS: She made an impression.

JK: And we moved to Rockford and then . . .

MS: Okay, so that was hometown.

JK: Then my mother passed away about there, when I was about thirteen.

MS: Did that have something to do with maybe you going into the Navy?

JK: No. Not that time. At that time, they didn't have all these good people taking care of everybody. My mother, as a bad habit, she taught me to eat, but she never weaned me. And so I had to go to work. In fact, I went to work before she died, when she went to the hospital. Somebody had to pay the bills. I was thirteen years old, working ten hours a day. And the best job, most paying job I could find, pushing an average wheelbarrow.

MS: Well, when did you end up joining the Navy then?

JK: I happened to be in Seattle, Washington with a friend of mine. And I was walking on the street one day and there's a kid from my hometown in a Navy uniform. And I saw him, I went up and said, "What the hell are you doing? I thought you guys couldn't get out."

In a way, I thought they were like in jail if you were in the Navy. He says, "No." He says, "When I don't have the duty, I can go. We're in Bremerton," he says, "you want to come down, see the ship?"

I says, "Yeah, I think so."

So the next day, I met him there and, rather, he told me when to come over and then he met me at the dock and took me over to the ship and we had lunch on there. And it was a destroyer.

So then when I got back to Seattle with my friend there, I said, "I don't know. What the hell. Maybe I'll join the Navy."

So I went down to the recruiting office, talked to the guy. And he said, "How old are you?"

I said, "Seventeen."

He said, "Tell 'em you're eighteen, then you won't have to get a lot of papers signed."

Well, he was a damned liar. I still had to get all the papers signed. And I had a hell of a time changing my birthday after that!

MS: What year was that that you saw the recruiter?

JK: Nineteen twenty-four.

MS: Okay.

JK: I enlisted in the Navy in November 24, 1924.

MS: And where did you go to boot camp?

JK: San Diego had just opened up.

MS: Oh, had it? Okay.

JK: Yeah, just opened up six months.

MS: How was that?

JK: And I found out, that's where I found out never to volunteer for anything in the service.

MS: (Chuckles) That's a good lesson.

JK: They asked for volunteer for truck drivers, that was me stepping right up and guess what I did? Dug post holes and (inaudible)

(Laughter)

JK: So I found out you don't volunteer for anything in the service. And then we went up to ocean side and got big rolls of sod and came down and put all that in. There was no sod there, no trees, no nothing.

MS: So you really helped build.

JK: Yeah, the naval training station there had just moved down from Goat Hill, in July of 1924.

MS: Well, San Diego wasn't a very big town back then, was it?

JK: No. San Diego was a nice little town then.

MS: Yeah. Well, now, how long did you stay in boot camp?

JK: Until 19-- December 6, 1946.

MS: In boot camp?

JK: Huh?

MS: In boot camp? You were there for how long?

JK: In the Navy?

MS: No, in boot camp.

JK: Oh, in boot camp. In boot camp, in detention for three weeks to see that you don't have any diseases and everything. You get all needled up.

MS: Right.

JK: Then you finally got your good clothes and then you went into the main unit, and you were in there for six weeks training.

MS: Okay, six weeks. Then did you get orders to go aboard a ship right after?

JK: Yeah. I had orders to go aboard. The fleet was coming around and the *WYOMING* was a coal burner. But I got out of that. I didn't care about shoveling coal. So later on, I went aboard the USS *PERCIVAL*, [DD-]298.

MS: Okay.

JK: Four-stack destroyer.

MS: Uh-huh, uh-huh. And then you stayed in the Pacific for a while?

JK: Yeah. Stayed on her. We went to Hawaii, then Australia, New Zealand and back there, and back up to Bremerton. And from

Bremerton, back down to San Diego. And then that fall we left for Panama for maneuvers with the East Coast fleet.

And there I had a chance, well, I found out that on the issue what it was, I think it was, firemen wanted a swap and that was going over to Europe and stays over there for a year, the Adriatic Fleet, they called it, was for one year, when divisional destroyers went over. And we were going over. So a guy come around, he wanted to swap, so I put in for a swap.

Said, "What do you want to swap for?"

I said, "Well, the thing is going to Europe," I says, "and I'd like to go to Europe and the Adriatic."

But I don't know what happened. Something happened. He didn't want to swap after a while. He changed his mind. And here am I, that put me on a well-known list, you know, on the ship. And when they came back, they had to transfer somebody to one of the minesweepers, and that was me. I got transferred to USS *WHIPPOORWILL*, which was a minesweeper in mine division here in Hawaii.

MS: Was it pretty good duty in . . .

JK: Oh, Hawaii was beautiful duty then. And Hawaii was beautiful. That's when Hawaii was beautiful. And that's also when I found out that Waikiki Beach wasn't a swimming beach.

MS: Oh, there was too much coral then.

JK: Nobody told me that.

(Laughter)

MS: Oops. You found that one out the hard way, huh?

JK: I learned it the hard way. One time -- the only hotel on Kalakaua Boulevard was the Moana. And there's two small ones over on Beachwalk, I think, was there. The Liliuokalani and the Halealeka -- Hale something [*Note: Mr. Karb is referring to the Halekulani Hotel*]. Another one, right now I can't say the name. But the main one was down there. And Sunday morning, you could shoot two cannons down Kalakaua Boulevard and not hit nobody.

MS: (Laughs) Don't try that now, huh?

JK: Yeah. And so I went down the Moana and rented a bathing suit. And they had a long little pier going out there. I went off the end of that, and when I dove off, that's what I shouldn't have done.

MS: Oh, my heavens.

JK: When I come back, I was all full of coral, scratched. I was bleeding all over. And then they put that damn iodine on me, and I almost died there.

MS: What year was that?

JK: Nineteen twenty-five.

MS: In '25. So really, this was -- you were still pretty new to the Navy?

JK: I was brand new. I was there, I hadn't been in a year yet.

MS: Oh boy. Yeah, what, did your chiefs bawl you out for doing that? Ruining government property like that?

JK: Oh, it didn't bother him. I was on the beach. This was on the shore out there, on liberty. Heard all about this Waikiki Beach, I wanted to go swimming there. I did.

MS: Yeah, you did, for a minute (laughs). Well, so . . .

JK: Then, from there, we left for -- July 1, think, we pulled out and started for Australia -- New Zealand, Australia and New Zealand, Samoa on the way, via Samoa. We stopped at Samoa for a fuel and food and stuff.

MS: You stayed with the minesweeper for how long?

JK: Oh, wait a minute -- I'm getting ahead of myself now. Twenty-five, well I was not on a minesweeper then. I was still on the *PERCIVAL*.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: Heading for Australia, New Zealand. And then we come back from there and we got down to San Diego -- that's Panama, I

told you. Then I came out here in '26 and I stayed here until 1928, in the fall of '28.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: When my cruise was just about up, I got transferred and I got transferred to -- I think it was the *MEDUSA*.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: I was on the *MEDUSA* then.

MS: Was that pretty good duty?

JK: Yeah, it was okay. To me, it's all the same. That was a great, big -- we named it the PRODUCE-A. (Chuckles) It was. It had huge machine shops on there and everything, big holes down there. That was quite a repair ship.

And then I got paid off from there in November. I left and went back home. Went back to Rockford and then Kenosha, Wisconsin, where my cousin was living up there. One of my aunts was up there too, so I went up to Kenosha and had visions of staying out of the Navy, until I was in Chicago with a friend of mine, and he says, "You want to get a job at the pumping station out there."

So I says, "Okay."

He called up and told the chief engineer I'd be out for a interview. So the next day, I was starting out, but I didn't know it at the time, I was only two blocks away from that massacre in Chicago.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: The Valentine's Day massacre?

MS: Yeah.

JK: I was going up to that pumping station up in the north side. And the chief told me, he says, "Oh, you're okay. I'll get you in all right."

But when I got down, back down to the place where I was at, they said, "We'll get you the job, \$200, I can get you that job."

And, "Two hundred dollars?"

Some guy comes up and offers you \$300 a job, I guess.

(Laughter)

JK: In Chicago, that was the rackets in those days.

MS: That's the way to do it, huh?

JK: So, no. And then a guy came up to me and offered me. He says, "You want to make \$300 fast?"

I says, "Yeah. But doing what?"

He says, "Driving a car from here to St. Louis."

Driving, yeah. He says, "Nice, big car."

Packard or Cadillac, whatever it was. And I says, "What will I be doing with it?"

"Nothing. You just drive it and take it to a certain garage down there and you have your fare on the way back will be paid, back to Chicago."

And what (inaudible), "You don't know." He says, "We won't tell you."

I found out it was booze.

MS: Oh. (Chuckles)

JK: Rumrunner. I decided I wasn't a rumrunner, so I didn't take that night. I shipped over in the Navy in Great Lakes.

MS: Oh, okay. And you went back in in twenty . . .

JK: In 1929.

MS: In '29, okay.

JK: I was about two and a half months, I guess.

MS: Okay. Enough of that civilian life, huh?

JK: Uh-huh. After that, what I ran into Chicago, about that job there and then another, I says, "Get a new racket so you come out feet first."

MS: That's right. (Laughs) At least in the Navy, you got a good job, huh?

JK: At least I had a job there.

MS: Well, now, so you went back in. Where did you go from there?

JK: From there I went to the East Coast and I went in the mine force there later on.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: Which was stationed up in Massachusetts there, just out of Boston. And we stayed on that and then I left that. Then next year, I guess in '30, I was heading for China. I went to San Francisco, cross country and then I went to the receiving ship there. And I got the *CHAUMONT*, I think it was, yeah, the *CHAUMONT*. The Navy had two transports -- the *CHAUMONT*, and the *HENDERSON*. I think, yeah, it was the *CHAUMONT*. When I got down to San Diego, I ran into an old friend of mine I played football with in Hawaii. And he was on the *HOLLAND*. And he says, "Joe," he says, "where are you going?"

I told him. I says, "We're heading for China."

He said, "What the hell you want to go there for?"

I said, "I wanted to get off the East Coast, that's all. And I put in for China to get out of there."

So he says, "How'd you like to come over to the *HOLLAND* and play football with the submarine team."

I said, "If it's not too late, I'll gladly go."

He says, "No problem."

He went up and saw the flag officers on the *CHAUMONT* and about three days later, before we left, in fact, was the day we were leaving. And they called my name up to the quarterdeck. And I says, "Ah, what the hell is going on?"

I thought they got me nailed for something.

(Laughter)

JK: But it wasn't. They told me, "Pack up your bag and you're being transferred."

And when I got up there, they gave me orders to go to the *HOLLAND*.

MS: Oh good.

JK: So then I was aboard the *HOLLAND*. I played at the submarine team there for a couple of years, then the all-Navy team in '31 we had, played the Army. I played in that.

MS: Oh,

JK: In the all-Navy team.

MS: Boy, you really -- by that time, you'd already been around quite a bit, then.

JK: Well, I've been around a little bit.

MS: Yeah. So then, what about the rest of the 1930s?

JK: Well, in the 1930s, I was still on the *HOLLAND*. We went up and the summer Olympics were being held in Los Angeles in 1932 and I went to those. I never missed a day, because I was on there First Class Petty Officer, then I was in the master arms force. And they sent out so many tickets. I think it was the officers got four and the chiefs got four and then the crew got about six. Half of 'em didn't go and didn't like it, but I went everyday. I never missed a day in the main stadium. I saw all the Olympians. In fact, I still got all the records and everything.

MS: Wow. That's great.

JK: And then, after that, kind of hazy. I don't know. Let's see, when did In 1932, I shipped over then I got transferred to put the USS *CHICAGO* in commission.

MS: Oh, okay.

JK: That was the new three cruisers that they had there when they scrapped all the battleships, they built this one. So I got on that thing and we made a (inaudible) down cruise to Papeete, Tahiti, through Hawaii. And when I got back from that, I got a letter from the commander that was the manager of the submarine's football team, "Joe, how'd you like to come play for the all-fleet team?"

I says, "Fine." I says, "But I just got a new ship here," I says, "I kind of like this. *CHICAGO* is pretty good."

But he says, "Come on down," he says, "I set that up." He says, "You don't have to do nothing. Don't even put in nothing." He says, "They won't know nothing. You'll get your orders."

He was a commander. He says, "You'll get your orders."

And I got my orders to go back down to *HOLLAND*. And from there, we went over to the air station for training and to play the Army, mainly. But we played quite a few other teams too.

MS: What position did you play?

JK: And I got my nose all smashed all over.

MS: Oh, did you really? (Laughs)

JK: And after that season was over, I got back on the ship and my nose blocked up. I couldn't breathe at night. I had to have a glass of water there. I couldn't breathe at all. I can't remember the doctor's name, but he was like my grandpa. He was like my father almost. And he said, "I'm going to send you to the hospital, Joe, to get a sub-mucus."

I said, "Okay." I said, "Will I be able to breathe good?"

He said, "Yeah." He said, "They'll fix it up. You'll never know you had anything wrong."

So I went to the hospital there in San Diego and the eye-ear-nose doctor was one of them doctors that was on the ship before I was, Dr. MAC-LEN-DON. He looks, he says, "Oh Joe, what are you doing over here?"

I says, "Oh, I gotta get a sub-mucus."

So when he did the sub-mucus, he said, "I'm going to straighten your nose out."

I said, "What for? Leave it like it is. They don't bother me. They take a look at that, they won't leave me alone."

Oh, he says, "To straighten it out," he says, "you know, it'll cost you \$1500 in civilian life."

This was in 1932 or '31, I forget. Right around there, somewhere. Thirty-one, I guess.

I says, "Well, I wouldn't have it done there."

But he made me stay there and when he got ready, they called me up and made a mask of my face. And they got that all done, they numbed up there and took chisel and scraped it all in. Took a piece of my rib off and it was comical to watch them shave the thing down, stick it back up under there.

MS: (Laughs) Oh geez.

JK: And they put that up there. So I got my nose straightened out. And then supposedly they wanted me to play football next year. I said, "Nothing doing. I'm not going to have that thing busted again."

MS: (Laughs) What position did you play, Joe?

JK: End.

MS: End? So you were a pretty quick guy and . . .

JK: Yeah, in some teams I played halfback and quarterback, but on the all-Navy team, I was an end.

MS: Oh. So now, how about the middle of late thirties, where'd you go there?

JK: Boy, I can't remember my name sometimes. How am I going to remember that?

MS: (Laughs) Well, should we go ahead and . . .

JK: Let's see now. Thirties, I was -- oh, I made Chief Petty Officer in 1935. And after that, I was transferred to the *BUSHNELL*. And

from the *BUSHNELL*, when she became a survey ship down in Panama, went around to Norfolk, got all rigged up and we were surveying the Gulf of MOR-OS-KEE-LO [*Maracaibo*] and I forgot the name of the other one -- Venezuela and Columbia.

And then when I got back from that, I had a hernia. So when we got back, the doctor sent me to the hospital. And I told the doctor, I said, "I don't want to operate too soon." I says, "I don't want to go back down to that damn Panama and that duty down there," because that was too hot.

MS: Yeah.

JK: So I was in the hospital there and then the day I saw the *BUSHNELL* leaving, I says, "Okay doctor, I'm ready for duty again."

So I got the *USS ASTORIA*.

MS: Okay.

JK: That was in 1938, I think. I believe -- the date exactly I can't. Anyway, we were the "Ash Ladder," they called it because the Japanese ambassador that died in Washington, we were hauling his ashes out to Tokyo. That's where we got the name "Ash Ladder." Instead of *ASTORIA*, it was the *USS "Ash Ladder"*.

MS: And you were with her until you got to the *ARIZONA*?

JK: Huh?

MS: You were with her until you transferred to the *ARIZONA*?

JK: *ARIZONA*, yeah. Well, there was another case of -- we went there, we went right direct from Panama, direct to Honolulu, Honolulu right direct to Tokyo. Then we went to China and we went to Hong Kong and a few places around before we came back. And when we came back, of course that time, this was about 1940, I think, or '39. Thirty-nine, I guess, '39 when conditions were getting and the whole fleet was out at Pearl Harbor. When my time was up, the chief engineer called me, says, "Joe," he says, "we'll put you up for warrant, if you want."

I says, "I got a brand new daughter," I says, "I only see for fifteen minutes." And I says, "I want to go home, get acquainted with her."

But they said, "We can't give you no leave."

Well, I says, "You can't give me no leave, I'll go back to the coast and get paid off."

I liked the *ASTORIA*. It was a good ship. I really enjoyed it. And so I got back and when I got into the naval station down in San Diego, I got a ride on an aircraft carrier boat back. I ran into an executive officer that was my executive officer on the *BUSHNELL*. He looked over, he says, "Joe, what are you doing here?"

I said, "I'm waiting to get paid off."

He said, "When was your discharge date?"

I says -- I counted fifteen days from now was the end of it.

So he says, "No use you'd want to hang around here."

I said, "I told them I got a brand new daughter."

And he says, "Where at?"

I said, "She's there living in Oakland."

So he told the yeoman, he says, "Make up leave papers for Karb until the date of his discharge, be back in on that date."

He says, "Commander, we're not allowed to give no leave."

"I says make up Karb's paper for leave."

Anyway, I was sitting outside of the yeoman's office there. Pretty soon, the commander came by again. He said, "What are you still here yet, Joe?"

"Yeah."

He went in there and the guy hadn't started my papers yet. He said, "Well, we're not supposed to."

He says, "If Karb is still here in fifteen minutes from now," he says, "you're going to be mud."

So boy, that Chief Yeoman got my papers ready and I was gone.

MS: (Laughs) In a hurry.

JK: And I went right on out and I went up to San Francisco. And then I had to come back down to San Diego to get paid off, which I did, and then I went back up San Francisco and I checked in with the Yeoman over at Goat Hill and told 'em. I says, "If they ever start giving leave, let me know and I'll be right over to ship over. Otherwise, I'm going to stay out two months and a half and then go back. But I'll get run over by a streetcar or something in the meantime."

Of course, then I already had twelve years in. So anyway, one day the phone rang over there. He says, "Joe, they're giving leave now. You can get leave."

So I went over, shipped over and got thirty days leave.

MS: Hey, that's great.

JK: And while I was riding up and down, some old friends from the fleet, from the all-fleet team. Howard, I think it was Howard Caldwell and another one. I can't remember his name. And I told him, I says, "You know, I've been in this canoe club for a long time." I says, "I've been in every ship except one," I says, "a battleship." I said, "How about letting me close out my career on a battleship."

"Which one you want?"

I said, "Well, don't really make any difference." I said, "I'd like to get one of the big five," which were the *CALIFORNIA*, *MARYLAND* -- the newest ones.

MS: Right.

JK: Well, they said, "I can't get you that," but he said, "how about the *ARIZONA*."

"Anything. Just so's it's a battleship."

And that was it.

MS: We're going to stop right here and change tape. That's a great place to stop too because we're going to get . . .

END OF TAPE ONE

TAPE TWO

MS: Let's go to December 6. Did you have duty or . . . ?

JK: No. Well, I had the duty for the weekend.

MS: Okay.

JK: But all the people taking a duty, I never stood a duty while we were out here, because my family was out here. My wife and daughter came out in -- right around the latter part of June or first of July. I forget which. So [John] Targ [CWT] and [William E.] Tisdale [CWT], and the rest of 'em gone, go to shore. I only had the standby duty on Saturday and Tisdale took that. Then on Sunday -- but I came out Saturday morning, you know, you feel guilty after a while with everybody taking your duty. Thought they might want to go ashore, change their mind. So I went back Saturday and, "What the hell's the matter? Your wife don't want you? She throw you out too? We don't want you here. Get off the ship!"

MS: (Laughs)

JK: So I was talking to my friend, Gallagher. I asked him if he wanted to go to that game San Jose was playing Hawaii that Saturday.

MS: Uh-huh.

JK: Yeah, it was Saturday. And I asked him if he wanted to go. I said, "I can get another ticket."

"Oh yeah, I'll go," he says.

So okay, we went ashore and I went and got the other ticket and then we went to the ball game. And then, Sunday morning, I was going to go back and started on my way back, and we got attacked.

When I got down, just before we got to the dock, a big explosion went and I said, "What the hell was that?"

Went around and asked the patrol. They said, "ARIZONA," and I looked up.

He said, "There ain't going to be no boats from there."

And Gallagher says, "What are you going to do?"

I said, "I'm going to try to get back to the ship somehow. I'm going to go see one of these cruisers, maybe we can get out."

He said, "I don't think anything is going to get out. And they probably don't want you to go aboard another ship because then they can't count the casualties or anything."

But about that time, the patrol on dock says, "Duck," he says, "here comes the strafing."

I dove under the house and when I came out of there, I didn't have no dirt on me at all, except that I was scared as hell.

MS: Uh-huh.

JK: And then finally a motor launch came over from Ford Island. I jumped into that. And we got strafed once going over. Then when I got ashore at Ford Island, walking along here, I see our major off the ship of the Marines detachment, Major Allan Shapley. And all he had on was his undershirt, pants and socks. Didn't have no shoes on or nothing. I says, "Coach," -- I called him Coach because we was playing baseball together -- I says, "what in the hell happened?"

He says, "Damned if I know it, Joe." He says, "I was up at the mainmast and when I saw there was nothing there, the first lieutenant and I were coming down. We come down the mainmast," he says, "when I got down on deck, my first lieutenant was right there," he says, "and pretty soon half of him fell in my arms."

He got sawed in two by a machine gun fire. And he says, "Fell down there," and he says, "I put him down on deck." He says, "I'm wondering what to do," he says, "and next thing I know, I'm in the water, keep swimming."

He got blown off the boat deck. And then I asked him --- he says, "I don't remember much," about that time, here comes another too.

And I start dodging. He says, "Single file, Chief. Single file."

And I think that saved my life, because if I'd have been dodging, I would have probably caught one, 'cause there was a mighty big stream right alongside of us going down there.

So when we got down to the ship, we got strafed one more, but on the way down, it was easy. When we saw 'em coming, we ducked under the big sheets of iron stored there and we could sneak in between them.

And we got down to the ship -- I guess we got back aboard the ship about 8:30, maybe a little after that, 8:45, just around nine o'clock or little before nine. And the quarterdeck was still afloat.

MS: You were trying to get on it while those other guys were still getting out.

JK: I got aboard. Yeah, we got aboard. We all got aboard. And Lieutenant Commander -- I can't remember his name right now -- was the officer of the deck and was walking around now. Some wounded we helped get off. Took 'em off the ship, put 'em in the boat, row over to Ford Island. They took 'em to the .

MS: Was that Fuqua, maybe?

JK: Huh?

MS: Was that Fuqua?

JK: Yeah. Fuqua, Commander [Samuel Glenn] Fuqua. He was the Officer of the Deck. He was Lieutenant Commander then. I couldn't think of his name.

MS: So you were helping get the wounded off . . .

JK: Yeah. But most of 'em were already off. There's just a couple three left.

MS: Uh-huh.

JK: And then we went around, opened up and wait and see if anybody getting out from the one hatch that was open down there yet. They were trying to get everybody down there out.

Pretty soon it was going and soon as the deck start getting awash, he said, "Oh, we better leave."

So we went over to the receiving ship right around noon sometime, I think it was. Yeah, because about ten o'clock, the last two reconnaissance planes went way over by Aiea and that way. That's what I think they were, reconnaissance planes, taking pictures of everything.

MS: Probably.

JK: And that was the last two planes. That was about ten, a little after ten. I don't know. Who the hell was looking at times then? We wanted to know if we were going to be pulling Tojo's rickshaw around Honolulu.

MS: (Chuckles) You guys really did fear an invasion?

JK: Oh, there was so much propaganda you wouldn't believe it. We got over to the receiving ship at around, as I said, twelve or one. Tried to give me something to eat. I ate it and threw it up, still crying, looking over at the ship and crying like hell. It burned for a week.

And so finally the officer of the deck come over. He says, "Chief," he says, "I'm going to give you a pick-up and three men and go to building so-and-so and get these machine guns out."

So I got the pick-up and I got the three men, working party, went over there and the guy in charge of the place, I told him, "I got to these guns, machine guns."

So we were loading 'em on there and when I come out, he was pulling 'em off. I said, "What the hell are you doing?"

He said, "I gotta get numbers."

I said, "You pull one more off, I'll give you a number!"

And we got, I don't know, I think we got about eight, nine or a dozen on the pick-up, took 'em over there and they had to crew -- because they were full of -- you couldn't use 'em, they were full of Cosmoline, then you had to clean all that stuff off before and put 'em up on the roofs.

So that afternoon, about four or five o'clock, they sent us over to the *TENNESSEE*, went aboard the *TENNESSEE*. I don't remember much after that. I was still in shock and sort of a daze.

MS: I'm sure you were. What time did you -- well, you were going back to the ship that morning anyway.

JK: Yeah, I was on my way. I was on my way back.

MS: So you arrived at the dock just about the same time the *ARIZONA* actually was bombed.

JK: Well, we were in the gate and just almost at the dock when that went.

MS: Okay.

JK: And the dock was up there by ten-ten dock, in the ten-ten dock. That's where the landing was, fleet landing, where you get your supplies aboard and everything. That's where it was. And that's -- before we got around I could see that big explosion, they told me and then I looked and, "Holy Christ. What's happening to the *OKLAHOMA*?"

Her bottom was sticking up. She turned over because she had all her watertight [*fittings*] open for inspection on Monday. They were going to have an inspection. And . . .

MS: Did you guys -- did you think that war was coming?

JK: Well, yes and no. We knew it but we never knew when. In fact, a week before, when we were coming out and I was walking on deck and Captain Van Valkenburgh come out and he says, "Oh Chief," he says, "what do you think? Are going to get back to the States, see our families?"

I says, "The way it looks right now, I don't think so." But I said, "You'd probably got more information on that than I have."

Then he says, "Well, I don't know." He says, "Well, what do you think of the situation, Chief?"

I said, "Captain, I wish I knew."

MS: What did you think of Van Valkenburgh?

JK: Huh?

MS: What did you think of the captain?

JK: Oh he was a -- we lost a very good man when we lost him. He was an officer. An officer and a gentleman. Act of Congress didn't have to make him a gentleman. Gentlemen are born, they're not made.

MS: Did you also know . . .

JK: Huh?

MS: Did you know Kidd also?

JK: I knew of him. I did not know him personally. I knew of the admiral because he was the division commander and of course we knew. And I seen him around, but I didn't . . .

MS: Not like the captain.

JK: No. The Captain was more friendly. He talked to you when he'd see you on deck.

MS: Well, it's fifty-five years now since the attack. What's your feeling about things now? Have they changed much?

JK: It's just as tough to go out there to the *ARIZONA* Memorial as it was then, as the day when I saw it burning. When I go out there and read those names up there, I still -- I'm done, I'm finished.

MS: You knew a lot of those guys, didn't you?

JK: Oh, all the chiefs on there. Everybody on the ship is your shipmate. But you also have a lot of personal friends that are real friendly. And especially the two of 'em that took my duties.

MS: How many of the guys that you really used to be good friends with survived?

JK: How many what?

MS: How many of your good friends survived?

JK: Just a couple.

MS: Just a couple.

JK: Just a couple. Some others that I knew, you know, casually, but those that were real in my division that I knew, they didn't survive.

MS: A hundred years from now, when our great . . .

JK: I'll try to be for that one.

MS: (Chuckles) We'll see you for that one.

JK: Right now, I don't even buy green bananas.

MS: (Laughs) What do you think -- what would be the story or the lesson that you would want our great grandkids to know?

JK: Just to be prepared and not fall asleep like we did.

MS: Do you think that we were, as a nation, not prepared for the war?

JK: We didn't want war and I don't blame anybody for wanting war. I don't want war, never. But I found out that you cannot get peace by being peaceful. You have to be a warrior. And I don't believe you can get peace by being with arms, but it seems you can't do without 'em.

Like now, over there in Bosnia and the rest of the places over there, we gotta send troops over. How do you get peace -- with big rifles, machine guns, cannons and all of these new weapons they got? You take 'em over. You don't get peace that way. That's not peace. Not to me anyway. Maybe I got a different philosophy. But that's the only way you can get it. But when you leave, those people will go right back to what they were doing, killing each other. At least that's my opinion.

MS: Well, we thank you for your opinions and your perspective and thank you for coming and sharing your time with us today and thank you for all the things that you did in World War II . . .

JK: Thank you.

MS: . . . to help us make this moment possible. I appreciate it very much. Thank you, Joe.

END OF INTERVIEW